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NEHEMIAH,
OR,
**THE EXCELLENT
GOVERNOR.**

BEING
A Discourse delivered at the Ca-
thedrall of the Holy TRINITY,
Dublin, Aug. 1669.

Before the Right Honourable
THOMAS Earle of OSSORY
Then Lord Deputy of Ireland.

By
J. P. D. D. and Dean of the said Church.

OXFORD,
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THE
SHEMIAH
OR
THE EXCELLENT
SCROLL

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Before the Right Honourable

THE
SCROLL

BY
R. A. D. DE ROGIER

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THE EPISTLE OF THE
GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN
TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE,
AND TRULY NOBLE
THOMAS Earle of OSSORY,
late Lord Deputy of Ireland, and eldest
Son to the Illustrious Prince
JAMES Duke of ORMOND
His Grace &c.

My Lord,



*His Sermon which not
long since had the honour
of Your Lordship's eare,
I have now made bold to
present more publickly to Your Lord-
ship's eye, being ambitious to let the
world see that those great obligations
of Duty and Honour which the Author
owes Your Lordship and illustrious Fa-*

A 2 milie,

The Epistle DEDICATORY.

milie, are a part of my debt also, not only as related to Him, and a Father before Him, eminent by your Favours, but also in the honour of being knowne to your Lordship and most Noble Family, and also by many Favours particularly obliged to subscribe my selfe with all gratitude and zeale,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's

Most Humble, and.

Devoted servant

B.P.



NEHEMIAH C.13. V.14.

*Remember me O God concerning this,
and wipe not out the good deeds which
I have done for the house of my God
and the offices thereof.*

N the midst of Judgment God usually remembers Mercy, and a Nation once chosen by *Him*, may in its *lowest ebb* (if there be any hopes of amendment) find a reserve of kindness.

Though the *Israelites* (for their Rebellion and impenitency) be overwhelmed by all the miseries of War *at home*, and oft times carried Captive to a strange land a-

A 3 broad;

The Jewes in their lowest estate are owned by God, who raiseth some of their own Nation still to be in favour with the Conquerours: whose endeavours doe much lighten (though not wholly take off) their Chaines.

Daniel with Nebucadnezar. Thus whilst that enthralled Nation was groaneing under Nebucadnezar, a wise Daniel is promoted, who by his interest in that great King, in part dries up their teares.

Cyrus always lived them. When in the time of Assuerus the subtilty of Haman brought them neare their last gaspe, a fatall decree being sent out for their totall massacre, God then advances Mordecai and Hester, whose diligence recalls that hasty sentence, and not onely saves the distressed Jewes from butchery, but hangs the author of it upon that gibbet which he prepared for another. Thus providence instilled into Cyrus (that great Prince) a very particular kindness unto the whole Nation; who openly acknowledges, *The Lord God of heaven hath charged me to build him an house at Ierusalem.* *Thus*

Thus as that Captive people were in the time of *Artaxerxes* weeping by the waters of *Babylon*, whilst their Harps were hung upon the melancholy willowes, and a deluge made in that river by their owne tears, *God* is then pleased to pity their heaviness, and to give them hopes of *one song more in Sion*, by the promotion of a generous *Nehemiah* into great favour with that Prince, whose noble temper makes use of his interest for the publique advantage of his owne Nation.

For whilst *Nehemiah* (as we find it recorded) is upon his attendance at Court, ^{His publique spirit.} he receives *fad newes* from *Ierusalem*; the ^{chapt. 1.} little scattered remnant there was preyed upon by insulting enemies, the *wall broken downe*, and the *gates burnt up*. This strikes deepe into the *publick spirit* of *Nehemiah*, and drownes him in mourning and tears, and the trouble of his hart became visible in the disorders of his countenance, whilst he attends as a *Cup-bearer*, the King perceives that unusual sadness, and when (upon

(4)

on strict inquiry) he knowes the reason of it from himselfe, he thinks fitt to send him with a *Commission* as his *Lieutenant* to govern that people with whom he was best acquainted, and for whom he had soe tender a respect, The King onely desires him not to stay long away, for he cannot be much without him, he loves his person and stands in need of his advice.

Nehemiah's Commission is no sooner sealed but he begins his Journey, and being arrived at *Ferusalem* he vigorously acts in that Sphere he was placed in ; and notwithstanding all attempts of *Enemies abroad*, and the disorders of *intangled interests at home*, he governes like *himselfe* as a prudent unbyased *Deputy*, and a true *Patriot* of the reall concernes of his Country : and at length having much settled that distracted Land, his *Master* cannot any longer be without his company, and therefore having finished all that man could perform, he is now upon the *close of his Government*, and in my Text we find him upon his knees in a modest reflection

*His commission
to be Governor
over Judea
chap. 2.*

fection upon what he had done, and a passionate entreaty for somewhat which he desired in the words I have read unto you, His Prayer upon the close of his Government.
 Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the House of my God, and for the Offices thereof.

Thus you may see my Text is the prayer of a chief Governor or Deputy under the great King Artaxerxes, over the Land of Judea, wherein we may find these particulars: 1. somewhat particularly mentioned and represented by Nehemiah, 2. the Petitions requested from God.

1. That which is mentioned is his good Deeds, which he performed in his Government; and these are interweaved with all the actions of his Authority, and may be reduced unto these two heads. 1. *Acts of Justice, and love to the whole Nation in the settlement of their Civil Rights.* 2. *His service to the Church, to the house of God, and to the offices thereof:* the one bespeaks his Piety to God, the other his Justice and Charity

to man; the first contains his diligence in Settling their temporal Interests, and the last comprehends his industrious establishment of God's worship and Religion.

His good deeds to the whole Nation.

As for the first, his *Acts of Kindnesse to the whole Nation*, these may be viewed in these following particulars.

1. In accepting of the Government in a dangerous time.

1. *His taking the Government upon him in troublesome, dangerous, & calamitous times;* the afflictions of Jerusalem were heavy, and the whole Nation lay in *Poverty* and *Contempt*, their *Purses* as well as their *Spirits* so much exhausted, as that *Nehemiah* could not expect to better his fortune, or improve himself; he knows the whole Province is in a flame, the gates of the holy City burnt, and the *wall* of it in the *dust*; the neighbouring people testify their enmity by their continual Rapine and Incursions, dead bodies (as *Josephus* tells us) strewed the High ways, and the whole Nation tired, very poor and low. Though all things be thus disheartening and sad, yet *Nehemiah* refuses not to stand in the *gap*, very generously endeavours

vours

vours the cure of this distemper, and thereby proclaims, that he prefers their common good before his own private ease, which as it was an act of generosity in it self, so it was hugely acceptable to that low distracted people. Thus it is some satisfaction not utterly to be forsaken, and they call for thanks who own our difficulties by participating in them, to pull us out; they deserve our acknowledgments, who venture themselves to save us from sinking. The Senate of Rome met *Terentius Varro* (though unsuccessful in his fight with *Hannibal at Cannæ*) with much honour, meerly *quia de Republiica non desperasset*, he despairs not of a more happy day: when the Sea smiles, it is not much valor or toile to take up the Helm, but for a man voluntarily to engage in a Storne when he might be set safe at land, to labour at the Helm when his neighbour's Ship springs a leak, to adventure into the mouth of a Canon to save his friend, when onely his own courage not any *Imposal* call'd him thither, this speaks some-

what generous and handsome. Thus good Nehemiah thinks it worthy of himself to take the *Helm* when *Iudea* was almost *shipwreckt*, whereby he gives the first check to those Enemies who thought to swallow up all, and who (it seems) were exceedingly troubled that any should appear to seek the welfare of that perishing Nation.

Chap. 2. 10.

2. His vigorous prosecution of the publick interest before his private Concerns.

ii herein appear-
ed

1. His wisdom.

Chap. 3.

2. Nehemiah's second *Act of Justice* and love to his people appears, in his vigorous prosecution of the publick work, before any advantage of his own private Concerns, (though these were many and great) but in the repairs of *Ierusalem*, and in all he evidenceth all the great Qualifications of a Commander and Minister of State.

As first his *Wisdom*, whereby he wrought the people to his own mind; and by prudent orders set many hands with much discipline to work: these animated by the example as well as the command of their *General*, chearfully did perform their several tasks, they finisht the *Wall* and the *Bulwarks* without any noise or confusion.

2. His

(9)

2. His *watchfulness and unwearied Vigilance*, in that though surrounded with ^{2. His Vigilance} enemies of all sorts, the *Samaritans*, the *Arabians*, and the *Amorites*, who strongly oppose that defence, yet his watchful Eye cuts off all attempts, and that 1. By gaining intelligence of their *Cabinet Counsels*, 2. By keeping a strict *VWatch* and well disciplin'd Guard, and in his own person he assists in the Repairs: 3. By discovering the *falsehood* of pretended friends; for some of his own party of the Nobles, being related to the Enemy by *marriage* and *interest*, many private *Letters* past betwixt them; these he diligently *intercepts*, and dissipates their confederacies against him.

3. He gave upon all occasions good testimonies of much *Courage* and *resolution*, and that mixed with a sweet affable pious temper; whilst the *Enemy* scoffs he prayes, and when by rumors of invasions and hired Prophecies they endeavour to terrify him, he scorns their fears, and very undauntedly goes on. When they find that terrors cannot prevail, ^{3. His Courage} _{Chap. 4. 3.} they

they change their note, and sliely invite him
 Chap. 6. 2. to a personal conference, to a cessation of Arms,
 the better to surprize him, and effect their
 designs, let us meet, said Sanballat, in some
 one of the villages of the plains, but he desires
 to be excused; they thought (said the good
 Nehemiah) to do me amischief: thus no pre-
 tence could hinder his resolution, his pub-
 lick management of Affairs.

*His Acts of
Kindness appears
in several other
particulars*

*as
In easing the
poor, and
Dispatching of
Petitions.*

3. Nehemiah's acts of Justice and Love to
 the whole Nation appears in his sweet affa-
 ble tendernes in all the lesser Concerns of
 that afflicted people: as 1. in dispatch of Pe-
 titioners, 2. in easing the poor from those
 pressures which lay too hard upon them. In
 unsettled calamitous times the meanest usu-
 ally suffer most, the great fish commonly
 breaks through whilst the lesser are swallowed
 up; this good Nehemiah endeavours to re-
 medy by abating their usury and exactions,
 by sweetning the Masters towards their ser-
 vants, and in openly rebuking the great
 men he brought matters to a more tolerable
 moderation.

Whereas

Whereas *Nebemiah* might have expected a general assistance in defraying those publick expences, and so might have been chargeable to the people as some *Governours* before him were, he desires from them no such Contribution, he hath a *large revenue* of his *own*, and he makes a noble *use of it*, *His charity and open Hospitality.* he *maintains* his family much upon his own charge, and in case he had an *allowance* from his *Master*, that will not serve, he spares not his own *Estate*, and *keeps an open free Table*, and he himself assures us, *That* ^{Chap. 5. 17.} *an hundred and fifty Jews were at my Table, besides those that came unto us from among the Heathen that were about us.* The Rulers of the Priests and of the people were within, and the poor distressed, who were *drifted* and forced into the *City* by the cruelty of enemies abroad, *these all find a kind reception and comfortable relief from him.*

Thus you see the first of *Nehemiah's* good deeds, his *Acts of Justice, and love to the whole Nation, manifested* 1. *In his taking upon him the government in an hazardous time;* 2. *In*

a generous and vigorous prosecution of the publick good before his own private concernes: wherein he evidenceth

1. *Wisdom and Prudence.* 2. *Vigilance and Care.* 3. *Courage and Resolution*, besides his many other Acts of mercy and kindness in *speedy easing the people*, in *moderating Taxes*, *relieving the Poor*, in *keeping an open Hospitality*, and *spending his own fair Revenue*.

Three inferences. And from all this I may infer these following Observations.

1. *That a people once owned by God may be driven to great exigencies by want and disorder at home, by the confederacies and violence of enemies abroad.*

2. *That a Nation thus in straits cannot be blest with a greater visible mercy, than with a Governour of a noble true generous Spirit.* Twas *Israel's* happiness to have such as *Moses* to deliver them from the slavery of *Egypt*, and such as *Joshua* to conduct them in the hardships of the *wildernes*, and such as *David* to feed them in a *green pasture*, and

and such as *Nehemiah* to build up a ruinous *Jerusalem*, to settle that broken Nation, and therefore

3. It is certain that as an excellent Magistrate is a great blessing, so the not being sensible of that mercy, is a great sin. The grumbling at *David*, and repining against *Moses*, and complaining against *Joshua*, a not being content with *Manna*, and the speaking ill of those who spend themselves for us, is a sin of a deep dye, and doth not usually go unpunished.

I have now done with the *first part of Nehemiah's good deeds*, his *Acts of justice and kindness to the whole Nation*, in the settlement of their *civil Rights*. I come now to the *second*, his *services to the Church*, and the *Offices thereof*. He confines not himself to *Acts of Civility and Tenderness* to the people, he knows that something is to be *done for God* as well as *Man*, and that whatever is performed for his *service* is the readiest way to advance their *reputation abroad*, as well as their *prosperity and peace*

C at

at home. He thinks himself obliged to provide for the welfare of their Souls as well as of their Estates, and therefore this prudent Deputy carefully sets himself to the reestablishment of that Religion which was banished long from Jerusalem, and to disowne and weed out those tares and corruptions which liberty and confusions had brought in. This he performs with zeal, and particularly mentions in my Text, the good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for the offices thereof.

These I shall reduce to the following particulars.

1. In cleansing the Temple.
Chap. 13. v. 8. *He took care for the cleansing and adorning God's house, and for the unmingled purity of its Offices.* In his absence from Jerusalem (being several times sent for to the King) Tobiab had intruded into the Courts of the Temple, and placed his own household-stuff in those chambers which were appropriated to a more holy use for the vessels of the Lord; this good Nehemiah is much displeased at, and upon his return tells us, *it grieved me sore,*

fore, therefore I cast forth all the household-stuff of Tobiah out of the chamber, and thither brought again the vessels of the house of the Lord, with the meat-offerings and Frankincense.

2. Intruders into the Priesthood are deposited, and made incapable of that service; ^{2. In depositing intruders into the Priesthood chap. 7. 64.} they who could not make out their legal qualification and descent, were, as polluted, put from the Priesthood.

3. Nehemiah (being happy in careful prudent Governours of the Church, he ^{3. In encouraging the Rulers & Priests in exposition of the Law.} with their help) sets up a diligent preaching and exposition of the Law. Paintul Ezra with his brethren are not idle, they counsel and instruct the people, and convince them of their Errors, in a Language they understood; he reads and they are attentive, he expounds the difficulties and they modestly receive his exposition, he makes a conveniency for audience a Pulpit of Wood, and they hang upon the Priests lips which are to preserve knowledg. The people do not pretend to be teachers themselves, or that

C 2 they

they know enough already, but they are modestly attentive, and promise all obedience to what they hear.

4. In prescribing a Conformity in the matter and manner of their worship.

Chap. 8. 6.

4. To keep off Confusion and new fancies he obliges them to a Conformity in their worship of God; as to the matter, he prescribes all the Commands of Moses without partiality to be punctually obeyed by all; as to the manner, they hearken to it unanimously, in one general posture, reverently and decently, he opens the Book and they stand up, he praises God and they openly proclaim Amen, Amen; they lift up their hands in sign of their consent, they bow their heads and worship the Lord with their faces to the ground in token of their humility.

5. In proclaiming a Fast.
Chap. 9.

5. To work the people to a true Sense of their former miscarriages, and God's unexpected mercies, he proclaims a solemn Fast, and enjoins an open confession of sin.

6. In sanctifying the Sabbath.

6. He rectifies the abuse of the Sabbath, and represses the prophanesse of those who made no distinction of dayes.

7. Whereas the Dues of the Priests were wrested

wrested from them, and the *Revenues* of the Church swallowed up by the great invaders of its Patrimony, we find pious Nehemiah vigorously acting in the restoration of them; he liberally contributes towards their maintenance himself, and builds *bouses* for the Prophets, and contends with those Nobles who thought it no robbery to keep what they can, he compels them to be just, and to pay their *Tithes*, and takes care that *they shall not depend upon the Arbitrary benevolence of the people.*

These were some of the many good deeds of this *noble Lieutenant* in his service both to the *Nation* and the *Church*; in whom an excellent *Magistrate* may find a pattern for himself. And truly Nehemiah's good deeds were of so noble and diffusive an influence, as that some of the Antients have thought him a type of our blessed Saviour Christ, which though *uncertain* whether intended by God's spirit, yet it is most infallibly true, that our Saviour did *spiritually* and substantially perform that, which

7. In restoring
their Patrimony
to the Church.
Chap. 13. 10.

Nehemiah w^tes;
ther a type of
Christ?

this

this Governor did outwardly effect: He like Nehemiah came to his own in a time of extremity and need, to comfort the broken-hearted, and to raise up the ruins of decayed mankind. Christ built up the walls of new Jerusalem (his Church,) and hath appointed Pastors and Governors to feed his flock, and his Gospel to sever the Wheat from the lese useful Chaff. He, like this good man, pull'd off the chains of the miserable, and proclaim'd liberty to the Captives laden with debt. Thus Christ did that spiritually, which Nehemiah did outwardly, and those virtues which were so bright in him, were such as Christ both requires and rewards in Magistrates, and Josephus his character of him is not yet dead, he was *Archon της οἰκους της οἰκους &c.* A just person of a most excellent disposition, a great passionate lover of his Countrey.

*Lib. Antiq. 11.
c. 5.*

5 Inferences.

1. Chief magistrates may interpose in matters of Religion.

From all these put together I gain these following particulars.

1. That the chief Governor hath power to rectifie the abuse of God's service, according to the

the establisht Laws of God and his Church: he may lawfully do what *Nebemiah* did; it is no encroachment upon Christian liberty to determine the use of things indifferent, nor is it prejudicial to the Commands of Christ to obey the constitutions of Authority.

2. Though the chief Magistrate may oversee the Priests, and cause them to execute ^{2. But not to} ~~surp~~ ^{the office} of Priests. their duties, yet they have no power to usurp their offices. His being a Magistrate did not privilege him to exercise the Priesthood; that Calling is sacred, and requires a due Mission as well as Abilities. If *Corah* offer to take up the *Censer*, the *Earth* may open and swallow him up. If *Vzziab* (though a King) intrudes into the Priests office, God will meet him in the way, and as he stretches out his hands with a *Censer*, a *Leprosie* breaks out on his Forehead; and he who would needs offer incense to God, becomes loathsome to himself; and he who was not satisfied to come in as a King, is shut out as a *Leper* from approaching the *Sanctuary*.

3. That the *information of Judgment* is the most

*Information of most natural means of rectifying the disorders
Judgment a
good means of our affections. The preaching of the word,
gaining affecti- and the instructing of the people, is the best
ons. way to make them sensible of their sins.*

*Confession of sin
to attend upon
our knowldg of
it.* 4. That a due confession and acknowledg-
ment of our guilt must attend upon the fence and
knowldg of our sins: a solemn Fast is pro-
claimed after reading the Law.

*To oppose sacrif-
ledg an argu-
ment of a pious
soul.* 5. That a restoring unto God the things
that are God's, and the opposing of Sacriledge
is usually an act of a pious and generous soul.
This overcomes very high temptations,
which many sink under: Nehemiah will
stand in the gap and hazard a contention
with any, and rebuke the Nobles, rather
than connive at the robbing of God. He will
honour the persons, and keep sacred the
possessions dedicated to his service, and not
suffer the Priesthood to be exposed to the ar-
bitrary benevolence of the people.

*Last part of Ne-
hemias request,
of what to be re-
membered.* Thus I have done with the first part of
my Text, that Nehemiah mentioned and
represented his good deeds for the Nation
and for the Church, I come now to the
last

last part, to that which he requests of God, and that is a Remembrance of these, Remember me O my God, and wipe not out &c.

In two phrases he desires the same thing, 1. a Remembrance, 2. a not wiping out his good deeds.

The first is positive, the second negative, ^{A triplex Remembrance.} both to the same purpose, both mutually explain each other: there is a remembrance Theoretical, and there is a remembrance Practical; the first is immanent, the second transient, that in affectu, this in effectu; and since Nehemiah enforces this request by a not wiping out, we may conclude that his prayer to God is, that he may be effectually remembered.

Here two things offer themselves, 1. by whom he would be remembered, 2. how he would have this Remembrance expressed?

1. The Remembrancer desired is God, ^{The Remembrancer desired} God. Remember me O my God.

Though Nehemiah's Acts of kindness to the people be great, and his sweet behavi-

our and care had extremely obliged all, yet he makes not his addresse to them, he minds not *Jerusalem* of her rebuilded wall, nor the Rulers of their vindicated honors, nor the Priests of their restored function (prostituted before to the basest of the people,) he minds not the whole Nation of its settlement and peace, as far as their intangled interests would permit, he turns not to any of these but to his God, *Remember me O my God.*

*Most eminently,
especially before
man.*

Philipp. 2.

He turns to his God 1. most especially and eminently before man, 2. exclusively, he utterly excludes and rejects the remembrance of man.

1. He turns most especially to his God, because his good deeds were performed in obedience to him.

2. Because they were effected by God's grace and peculiar strength, who worketh in all men to will and to doe; and who actuates Princes and Magistrates with Spirits suitable to their Stations.

3. Because God's glory was the great aim
of

of what he did: this the Gentiles scoff at, and from the ruins of the *City* and the neglected defilements of the *Temple*, took occasion to condemn the *God of Israel*, who once owned himself their *Protector* and their mighty deliverer.

4. Because God is pleased to accept of acts of *Charity* and *love* to man as done to himself, and therefore for these and many more reasons he most especially hath recourse in the first place to God, *Remember me O my God.*

2. He turns to God exclusively. Man's remembrance is not at all desired, he is silent of that, and onely begs this, because

1. God was not at all obliged to him, nor his *Debtor* for his *good deeds*, but man was, and therefore were men *Candid* and *ingenuous*, and but tolerably *Just*, *Nehemiah* might have very well expected that they would not easily forget him; or if they did, he knew it would be their *own fault*, not *his*, and consequently the *ill* would be *theirs*

too for being so ungrateful; and therefore this noble *Governour* is above their flattery, and hunts not after their praise, he seeks no monument in their remembrance, he minded not himself in doing them good, nor doth he court their *applause* for what he did perform.

Second reason.

2. It is rationally probable that *Nehe-miab* omits any desire of being remembred by man, out of a real distrust of ever having it duly paid; for if *God* be forgotten, man cannot very well expect to be remembred, and they who are too usually *unmindful* of the daily mercies of *God*, will quickly be strangers to the kindnes of man. Experience tells us, that a little trouble or hardship of a few hours, blots out the memory of mercies poured down the whole life before by *God*. If *Israel* want a little water, they will forget the wonders of *Egypt*; a little bad news, or a wanton desire of *flesh*, or a few dayes absence of *Moses*, makes them all dance after a *Calf*. Well therefore may the

the *Magistrate* distrust a remembrance of man, since man thus easily forgets his *God*. *Magistrates*, who move in an *open Sphere*, (though never so sweet and pleasing in their influence, yet) accidentally may attract some *unquiet exhalations*, and if they displease but *once*, that *one ungrateful Action* is the *only thing remembred*. And therefore as every pious prudent Christian secures to himself a more *faithful repository* for his *treasure in Heaven*, because he finds the *moth and the rust* breaks through all on *earth*; so good *Nehemiah*, because he finds men grossly *ignorant*, causlessly *querulous*, *unconstant* in their *affections*, and *ungrateful* for *kindnesse* and *favours received*, therefore he thinks not fit to *rely upon their memories*, nor *court their applauses*, but looks *only upon his God*, who *faithfully records all*, whose *gifts and promotions are without repentance*, in whom there is no *variablenesse or shadow of Change*.

But some may question, whether this
may

*whether it be a
my presumption
in Nehemiah to
be remembred by
God?*

may not be an Act of Presumption for any man, who at best is bad, to present his good deeds to God for a remembrance for him, in whose Eyes the Seraphims themselves are *impure*. But it is certain

1. That Nehemiah did no more than what many good men before him did. Thus Obadiab mentions his good pious service in hiding the Prophets in a Cave &c.

*How far a man
may reflect on
his own good
deeds?*

2. *He did no more than what lawfully may be done.* For seeing that deeds truly good are done in Obedience to God, in faith and to his glory, they flow à *Deo in Deum*, and therefore cannot but cheer up the Soul, and breath into it those Comforts which attend upon a good Conscience, and add Confidence to our Addresses unto God.

2 Cor. 1. 12. This St. Paul triumphs in, and when man is silent, God is oft pleased to shew publickly his remembrance of good Actions, done in obedience to him. If Abraham put a knife to his sons Throat when commanded, God

God openly remembers it, and promises a reward. If the people murmur against Moses, God himself will vindicate him, *he is faithful in all my house*; he owns David to be a man after his own heart, and proclaims Job to be a perfect and an upright man; and he tells the Church of Thyatira, *I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and patience*: and therefore we may safely conclude, that this kind of representation of good deeds to God, infers neither presumption in the Agent, nor merit unto justification; for a deed may be good in its kind, yet not meritorious, and a good man may rejoice in the testimony of a good Conscience without arrogance or boasting.

To Nehemiah therefore, and such as he is, it may be said, Thou hast been faithful to God and thy own Master; no hazards could stagger thy principles, nor the potency of several factions lessen thy care of God's service and honour; the whole Nation hath for many years tasted of the Sweets of thy Government,

ment; and the Revenue and Persons of Priests shrouded under thy protection, and therefore however men may be affected, yet it is thy comfort that thou hast an infallible Record in heaven, who sees in secret and openly rewardeth, to him thou mayst freely call Remember me &c.

Nehemiah clears him from presumption by being to be spared. Spare me &c. And to all this let me adde two words more, which Nehemiah makes use of wholly to clear his words from presumption: thus v. 22. Remember me and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy. God's sparing is an act of Providence; it is the not inflicting of that evil on a person, which God might in justice or power send down, it is sometimes express by not imputing, by covering sin and pardoning offences, and therefore done according to multitude of mercies.

And truly the deformity of Sin is so monstrous, and the Curses which attend upon it so hideous and many, as that to spare when punishment is deserved, to forget the sin and remember the sinner, is not a single kindness but a multitude of mercy. Thus

Thus you see Nehemiah's request, Spare me O my God, is not the Language of pride, nor the pleadings of merit; tis no Pharisaical lisp, but the groan of a Penitent, God be merciful to me a sinner.

And truely we may find that Nehemiah, Good reason for it. though never so godly, hath good reason to beg for a Spare me, for though his good deeds as such do not deserve a reward, yet they are not *as such* lubbles of punishment; however he hath reason to cry Spare me. For

1. There is an union and confociation Because he may smart for the peoples sins. betwixt the *Magistrate* and *People*; and we oft find that the one is punisht for the misde-meanours of the other.

Thus some thousands of David's Subjects smart for his sin of numbring the people, and an excellent *Josiah* removed for the sin of *Judah*: God was angry with *Moses* for the peoples sake, and let *Nehemiah* be as just and as innocent as he can, yet he may suffer for the peoples corruption, and therefore in prevention of this he may cry Spare me O my God.

2. It

2. It is certain, that the *best of his deeds had their mixture of imperfection*, and therefore being conscious to his own failings he begs for *pardon and acceptance*. Magistrates are but *men*, and not utterly privileged from the passions of flesh and bloud; and therefore St. Paul enjoyns supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks for all in Authority; we are obliged not onely to render ~~excessive~~ *thanks*, for the happiness of Government, and the good it brings with it, but ~~second~~ *supplications*, for the averting of Calamity from their persons, and ~~second~~ *prayers* for those graces they stand in need of; and we must send up to the throne of Grace ~~intervening~~ *intercessions*, for God's pardoning unto them their sins, for his remission of their *personal* offences, as well as their *publick* failings. This well weighed would stop the censures of men, a sense of this invites Nehemiah to *wave* all thoughts of his *good deeds*, to banish any thing which exceeds an humble *Spare me*;

he

he claims not a *Crown* for his *merit*, but *petitions* for a *pardon* for his *failings*, and that according to the *multitude of mercies*.

Lastly, *Nebemiah* closes up his whole Book with one word, which wholly *clears* his *Prayer* from *presumption*, and that is, *Remember me O my God for Good*.

1. *For good!* This is the voice 1. of *Hu.* Remember me for good. *mility*, whereby he acknowledges himself to be in a *state* capable of being *made better*, though he be *highly loved* by his *Prince*, and of great *authority* at *Court*, and *tenderly honoured* by *Priest* and *People*, yet there is a *greater good* than all *this* which he *aims at*, and makes the *object* of his *desires*, and *this* he looks for *there* onely where it can be had, from his *God*, to him he cries, *Remember me for good*.

2. *For good!* This is the voice of *confi- 2. of Faith.* *dence and trust*, it implies his *stedfast belief* that there is a *reward* laid up for *good deeds in general*, and that his *good services particu- larly* shall be *crowned with good*.

This God hath *promised*, and therefore every good man of us, as well as *Nehemiah*, may *rely* upon it; especially if we make God peculiarly *our own* by our reliance and *faith*, so as to call him justly *my God*: and if we evidence our *faith* by our *good deeds* to *God and to Man*, if every one of us in our own *Spheres* *discharge* our *duties* to *God*, to our *King*, and to *one another*, if we do all this sincerely and constantly, we may then confidently pray with *good Nehemiah*, *Lord remember me*; we may then be assured we shall not be *forgotten*, and that our humble *Spare me* will be attended with the *greatest good*.

Application.

Three queries.

I should now descend to *Application*, but that I am confident that most of this *Auti-
tory* have done that in *their thoughts already*, and therefore I shall conclude all with these *2 or 3 Queries*, which I shall leave to your own resolution.

Whether, when *we* of this *Kingdom* were like those of *Ierusalem*, at a *low ebb*, surrounded

rounded with *stormes* and unexpected tempests, when *enemies* prest us *without*, and *calamities* and *distresse* disheartned us *within*, whether then we were not happy in a gracious King, who pittyng our sad estate did give *Commission* to a real *Nebemiah*, whose *wisdom* and *vigilance*, whose *courage* and *conduct* preserved a very *small handful* from *violence* and *ruine*; whether our *Pilot* did not generously engage in our *storms* to keep us safe, neglecting his *private ease* for the *publick good*, and *charitably* relieving the *naked* and *poor*, when he had but *little left* to maintain himself.

2. When *Rapine* and *Confusion* encroached upon the *Office* as well as the *Patrimony* of the *Church*, when the *chambers* of the *Sanctuary* were fill'd with *Tobiah* and his *followers*, when the *portions* of *Gods Altar* were shared betwixt *Sanballat* and his *crue*, whether then we were not *once more* (by the *cate* of our *present Soveraign*) made happy with *his return*, under whose

wing

wing and protection we had been formerly preserved? whether he hath not upon all occasions both before and now encouraged religion, and respected the very persons as well as the function of the *Clergy*? Whether he did not refute all profers which were in the least inconsistent with his *duty to God* or his *Prince*, or the *tranquillity of his Charge*, whether I say upon all opportunities he hath not shewed himself a *Nehemiah indeed*?

Lastly, if upon search we find all this and much more to be true, then, whether we of this place are not obliged 1. to thank God for his mercy, 2. to thank our Sovereign for his still continued care in sending such to cherish and protect us, 3. (to conclude all) whether it does not befit us that that request which *Nehemiah* in my Text put up for himself, may be our joyn *Prayer* for him, whose Government and Care we have had so kind an Experience of, viz. That *God would remember both him and us for good*, that he would

would spare them according to the multitude of his mercies, that he would not wipe out all the good deeds which he and they all have done for this whole Nation, for God's Church, and for the Offices thereof. Amen.



F I N I S.

